



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 8

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DEC 14 2011

Ref: 8EPR-N

Brian Ferebee, Forest Supervisor  
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest  
c/o Pam Jarnecke  
125 South State Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84138

RE: EPA Comments on Final Environmental  
Impact Statement, Blacks Fork Salvage Project,  
CEQ #20110392

Dear Mr. Ferebee:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. Section 4321, *et seq.*, and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 7609, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 (EPA) has reviewed the November 2011 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Blacks Fork Salvage Project. This FEIS was prepared by the Evanston-Mountain View Ranger District of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest to analyze the environmental impacts associated with proposed vegetation treatments developed in response to the continuing mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic in the area.

EPA provided comments on the Draft EIS (DEIS) with a May 23, 2011 letter. The DEIS analyzed three alternatives, with the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2) described as treating 2,577 acres with a combination of timber salvage (553 acres of clearcut and 444 acres of sanitation harvest) and prescribed fire (560 acres salvaged and then treated with prescribed fire and 970 acres treated with only prescribed fire), and necessitating approximately 11 miles of temporary road construction to access treatment units. EPA's primary concerns with the DEIS were related to air quality, aquatic resources and habitat and special status species.

The FEIS includes, among other things, expanded discussions in the Climate Change, Air Quality, Fire/Fuels, and Water Resources sections. Supplemental information also is provided in Appendix B, Response to Comments. With the expanded sections and additional information, the FEIS provides a more thorough disclosure of existing conditions and project impacts.

## **Air Quality**

We appreciate that the FEIS includes an expanded Air Quality section. This section provides additional data for monitoring sites surrounding the project area and identifies sensitive receptors such as nearby population centers. In addition, Appendix B, Response to Comments, provides supplemental information related to smoke management and dust control. For future projects, we recommend summarizing data for existing conditions and including an emissions inventory of predicted air emissions from all project activities.

## **Aquatic Resources**


EPA appreciates the additional FEIS environmental consequences discussion regarding the affects of organic matter on Meeks Cabin Reservoir's water quality. In addition, Appendix B, Response to Comments, provides supplemental information related to wetlands data and protection, water quality data, impaired waterbodies, water quality impacts of the MPB epidemic, and impacts of roads on aquatic resources.

## **Habitat and Special Status Species**

We note that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service consultation process has been completed now, and you have received their concurrence on this project.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. If we may provide further explanation of our comments, please contact me at 303-312-6925, or your staff may contact Amy Platt at 303-312-6449.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bohan', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Suzanne J. Bohan  
Director, NEPA Compliance and Review Program  
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation